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SUBJECT Afghanistan

WILLIAM BUCKLEY: The figures are startling. Four million exiles, the largest exile population in the world. One million estimated killed since 1979. The torture and executions at a rate that would have made Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin sleep content with their day's work.

Historians will perhaps recall that the West rallied to the aid of Afghanistan by depleting our representation at the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980.

A two-sentence reminder. In April 1978, Afghan strongman Mohammed Daoud was killed in a coup that ushered in a pro-Soviet administration headed by Taraki. In December of 1979, Taraki was ousted by the Soviets, executed, and Karmal was installed. And Soviet troops rolled in and are there in force to fight the insurgents.

Imagine Afghanistan within a triangle whose apex is down. On top is Russia, to the left Iran, to the right Pakistan. End lesson.

Under the sponsorship of the Afghanistan Relief Committee and of Freedom House, here in New York we have two resistance leaders who will discuss the situation in their country. Abdul Rahim is political officer of the Yamyay Islami (?) Afghanistan, probably the largest of the resistance groups based in Peshawar. Mr. Rahim, Colonel Rahim is a civil engineer -- Mr. Rahim, rather, is a civil engineer by profession.

Colonel Mohammed Assil, trained in Egypt and Japan, was a police officer and professor at the police academy on the

faculty of law. At the request of resistance leaders, he remained in place after the 1979 communist coup and witnessed Soviet procedures. On a trip to Mecca last November, he defected openly, and works now with a resistance group.

Our examiner today is Mr. Paul Kreisberg, Director of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations since 1981, about whom more in due course.

I should like to begin by asking Mr. Rahim to brief us on the current situation. The Russians launched a great offensive a few weeks ago. How is it doing?

ABDUL RAHIM: Actually, Russian, when they saw that they failed in all their plans and they defeated in most of their place from Mujahidin site and from the freedom fighters, they changed their tactics and they changed their targets. Right now the main target of the Russian soldiers are the civilians right now, because the civilian and the people of Afghanistan, they are the only supporter of Afghan resistance right now in the war. We don't have any supporter, direct support from outside, and we have the only supporter, they are the people of Afghanistan. That's why the Russian have started, and right now the main target is the civilian.

And beside this, they've increased their military activities in bombarding the villages and destroying the crops, the foods, and killing the women and children.

They are talking about negotiation to change the mind of the world -- I mean change the idea of the world toward negotiation, which is dishonest negotiation, and Russian have not ever been honest in any negotiation in the history. So this is another thing to bring the mind of the -- attention of the world toward negotiation, and increasing their military activities inside Afghanistan.

Right now, they have more than 180,000 forces, and also -- soldiers. And also 20,000 Afghan army, which they are not trusting on them. And the resistance right now have more than 85 percent of the area under control. And just the Russian, they have control on their bases and the big towns, except during the day. After four o'clock, the resistance have control on the towns also. And they are doing their guerrilla activities.

Tell me this, Mr. Rahim. Assuming that they were in negotiations, with whom would they negotiate, given that there is not, in my understanding, an undisputed leader of all the resistance forces? There is no Colonel de Gaulle, is there, in the situation?

RAHIM: Right now, you know, the representative unit in United Nation is talking with Pakistanis' representatives and directly with Iran, and he did trip to Kabul to talk with the

puppet of Russians. So they are not talking with those people who are really fighting against the Russian.

So, any negotiation which the Mujahidin, the resistance from one side, and the Russian, which are fighting right now on the side, from other sides, will be useless.

BUCKLEY: Well, Colonel Assil, let me ask you this. From your knowledge of the inside organization of the Soviet-dominated Afghan situation, do you believe that the Afghans who are working for the Soviet Union are reliably pro-Soviet, or do you think that they would slide over to the insurgent side if they were given an opportunity?

COLONEL AYYOUB ASSIL: In Afghanistan we have just about between five and six thousand communist who are working now with the communist regime. And the other Afghans are all against the puppet regime and they are all against the Russians.

BUCKLEY: Well, I thought that Mr. Rahim gave slightly larger figures for the number of Afghans who are under military discipline of the Soviet Union.

RAHIM: I mentioned that 20,000 that the Russian, they are not trusting on them. During the operation, during the day, they are using Afghan Army as [unintelligible] force. In the back of the army they are using tanks. When they escape, they are trying to don't fight, they are shooting them by the tanks and they're killing them.

And during the night, after operation, after attack, they are making them disarm and they are planting mines around them to not escape, to desert to the resistance.

So, I mean, they are not honest. I mean 20,000 army doesn't mean that they like Russians. I mean the communist are between five and six thousand that Colonel mentioned. Those people who are the communist, I mean they are puppets. They are working in intelligence services. They are working in torturing. They are working in some other KGB activities.

BUCKLEY: Well, Colonel Assil, tell us something about your own experiences when you were right there in the womb of the enemy. How did the communists exercise control over their puppets? Was it by threat, or by inducements, or a combination, or how?

COLONEL ASSIL: After the invasion, Russian invasion in Afghanistan, before I can talk after the Rus -- the communist coup, they send hundreds of advisers. They call themselves advisers, but they are not advisers. They're all KGBs. They send to the Ministry of Interior, the ministry I was working --the Ministry of Interior, that means the ministry of security

in Afghanistan. In this ministry, after the invasion -- they send at the beginning 50. After the invasion, they send more 150, with a Russian general. And this time they wanted to control all the Ministry of Interior. And in this time, they send about 150 other Russian advisers to the Ministry of Justice. And in these two ministries, they wanted to change or to destroy our legal proceeding.

BUCKLEY: One hears a lot about the Russian advisers. Do they in fact take over, or do they always work behind front men who are indigenous?

COLONEL ASSIL: They are ruling. I gave you an example. The Ministry of Interior, Afghan Minister of Interior, an Afghan, he cannot do anything without the permission of the Russians. the Russians, they are ruling.

You know, in one ministry -- in each ministry there are 500 Afghans if there are 200 Russian advisers. So they are ruling. In each department, there are two or three Russian advisers. So they are always in the front. They are ruling. They are giving the orders.

BUCKLEY: Well now, how did they achieve that dominance, gradually or suddenly with the coup?

COLONEL ASSIL: When they came after the invasion, first they, as I told before, they destroyed our -- they want to destroy our legal proceeding. Before the communist coup, we had legal proceeding which you has now in United States. But after the invasion, they wanted to change, and they changed. Before the invasion, our system was a very normal system. There was the right of defense. There was...

RAHIM: Before communist coup.

COLONEL ASSIL: Before communist coup, we had our very normal legal proceeding, which you has now in United States. We had courts, three -- elementary court and secondary court and a high court. And there were right of defense and there were judgment.

But after the invasion, they destroyed all. Now there is one court. The name of this court is the Revolutionary Court. And there is no other courts. They collect -- they're always collecting the people from their houses and sending to the jail without any question. And they send hundreds of them and they kill them without any trial.

BUCKLEY: Now, we hear a lot of figures about the number of people who are tortured and executed. Do you have any personal knowledge that this is correct, or might it be an exaggeration?

COLONEL ASSIL: After the Russian invasion until last September '82, in which I left my homeland to Saudi Arabia, only in the Ministry of Interior they killed and tortured more than 12,000 Afghans. And there are other places, like Pulacherhi (?), which is very famous jail. From the beginning of the communist coup until now, they killed more than 80,000. I mean between 80,000 until 100,000 they killed, tortured, many of them without trial, without any judgment.

And there is a judgment they call the judgment of the desert, which means they don't asking the question, and they are sending for killing.

BUCKLEY: Well, you say it's reduced to a single court called a Revolutionary Court. But you're saying that a lot of people who are killed are executed without even a judgment from that court.

COLONEL ASSIL: Yes.

BUCKLEY: Now, do you know this personally?

COLONEL ASSIL: Yes.

BUCKLEY: I see. You actually witnessed the executions?

COLONEL ASSIL: Yes. Yes.

BUCKLEY: And the procedure was what, simply to pull them out of jail and execute them? No charges made?

COLONEL ASSIL: After the invasion, three months after the invasion, there was a very big demonstration in Afghanistan. All the Afghan people, they went to the roof of their houses and they said, "Allah akbar," which mean that God is great. And after this, in the morning -- or two days later, they collected the peoples, hundred thousand of people, they collected and they send them to the jails. Many of them, they went and we don't know about them. They are unknown until now.

And some of them, they were lucky, or maybe, for them, a little important. They asked them for the investigation in the different places, in the Ministry of Interior, in the intelligence service -- I mean the KGB of Afghanistan. And there are other places like jails. And they begin to torture them and to ask them why they made this big demonstration.

So, in this time they constructed many chambers for tortures. I mean chambers without -- soundproof. And they were torturing peoples, women, children. They tortured the children in front of their parents. They tortured the women in the front of their husbands. They used, generally, the electric power shock for the prisoners. Many who had heart troubles, they

killed under these powerful shocks.

BUCKLEY: Is torture an Afghan institution? That is to say, before the coup, was torture regularly practiced in Afghanistan, or not?

COLONEL ASSIL: Before the communist coup, we didn't know anything about the torture. Just in criminal law, there was -- they said, the criminal law said if at the time of the investigation a detector torture anybody, imprisonment was between six months until two years. If during the time of the interrogation there is any injuries, the imprisonment was until seven years. If there is, I mean, a murder, a dead, so there was a death penalty for the detector who is asking.

But after the communist coup, they begin to torturing the people.

BUCKLEY: Now, are the torturers themselves Afghans, or are they Russians?

COLONEL ASSIL: The torture, they are Russian and Afghan. I mean in each torture chamber there are Afghans, and the torture -- the Russian who leads the torture.

BUCKLEY: And so the objective of that torture is simply as an instrument of terrorism to suppress the insurgency movement. Is that correct?

COLONEL ASSIL: Yes.

BUCKLEY: Now, to what extent has it been successful?

COLONEL ASSIL: It is not successful.

BUCKLEY: Mr. Rahim says that 85 percent of the people are still opposed.

COLONEL ASSIL: Because many of people, they want to die, but they don't want to...

RAHIM: No. I mentioned 85 percent of the area, not the people. The people, 99 percent, more than 99 percent of the people, they are against Russians. I mentioned just about the area they have under control. That is more than 85 percent.

So, 5000 people between, you know, 16 million. They cannot come in one percent, also.

BUCKLEY: Do you easily account for the fact that Hitler was able to dominate France, and yet Russia is not able to dominate Afghanistan? How would you account for that?

RAHIM: You know, it depends to the resistance, the morale and the [unintelligible] and the hope that the people --they love their country, they love freedom. They should reaction against the invasion aggressive. And they stop the Russian, right now, for 3 1/2 years.

I mean the people, they don't like them. We have bad impression from the previous history of the Russian in Central Asia in Muslim countries. They fought for 20 years. They changed the generations. And they, after that, they got the control on that side.

So we understood the Russian [unintelligible] do in Afghanistan. That's why everybody get up and shout reaction and everybody are supporting the resistance inside Afghanistan.

BUCKLEY: Well, are you saying that because -- I'm sure if I were a Frenchman, I would say, "Well, my people love freedom just as much as your people." So there has got to be something that accounts for the continuation of a 99 percent resistance over against the relative tranquility in France after the fall of Paris.

RAHIM: Actually, I don't know the exact situation of that time in France. But, you know, our people have been motivated due to the religious idea that they have, Islamic ideology; and also due to their freedom. They are loving their country. They have [unintelligible] the previous. They have kicked out British forces from Afghanistan. They kick out [unintelligible] at that time. I mean this kind of things have repeated in Afghanistan because Afghanistan is -- due to the --geopolitically, it is very important place. So that's why they have faced different invasion in history.

And this is -- right now, this is the third time. And they will succeed. And we hope and we believe in this succeeded. We will win the war.

BUCKLEY: Let me ask you a question or two on the matter of the geopolitical importance of Afghanistan. Here it is, of course, right here, with a common border.

RAHIM: This is Russia.

BUCKLEY: How long is this?

RAHIM: One thousand, five hundred kilometers, something like that. And from here up to here, to the warm ocean, to the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan is the nearest way for the Russian. This is one important thing. And also, from here they can surround China, also. And then from here, they can reach to the Persian Gulf. And also they can hit all other strategic points in Indian Ocean that the Western countries have. Diego Garcia, for example.

Right now they are establishing in Shindand, in this area, a Shindand air base. The Shindand air base, they're installing different kind of missiles that could hit from here, you know, Diego Garcia.

So, that's why, you know, this is very important for these people. And this is the way for them. If they get stuck, they can Pakistan easily because Pakistan doesn't have such a mountain, like our people, that could fight and take control of those mountains. The Hindu Kush mountains can act as a wall right now. But the resistance succeed because all the mountains are under control of the resistance.

So, if they get out from this area -- I mean if they get control of this area...

BUCKLEY: This area here.

RAHIM: This area completely. I mean Afghanistan. I mean if they pass through these mountains, so in this flat area, in this flat area, those high-speed tanks like they have in this area, nobody can stop them, and they can reach to the Gulf easily. And they will have a control of the Middle East and the import of the oil and everything. And they will succeed from here on Middle East, on Western countries, on China.

BUCKLEY: Well, are there any preliminary indications that they are accumulating military reserves in that southwest section that could be used in Persian Gulf operations?

RAHIM: Yeah. Because usually they are not using too much the forces which are based in Shindand. I mean the Shindand air base is for their further purposes, establishing. And they have increased -- they have more than 30,000 forces there. And with the most modern aircrafts and tanks, the high-speed tanks. And nobody can go there. And right now they have started to install some kind of missiles there that we don't know how it is. So for their further purpose, and because they are not using too much those forces.

BUCKLEY: Well, now let's get into the question of what you need to do and what you need in order to do it. Is it fair to say that there is no reasonable way to suppose that Afghanistan can ever succeed in repelling the whole Soviet military machine?

RAHIM: There are different ways. The first one belongs to the pressure of the military pressure from the people of Afghanistan side, from resistance side. And this pressure can increase by the military. I mean war support -- arms support, not manpower. Because the people of Afghanistan, they are enough right now. Up to the end of war, we have enough manpower to fight.



The main thing is to have effective and sufficient arms and ammunitions.

And the second thing is the economic support of the civilian to stay in their land and support the resistance, because of medicines, foods, and clothes, these things the people need. Because the people, because of bombardment, they cannot continue their agriculture activities.

So, if we could support the people to stay there and support the resistance, and if we could get enough and effective weapons, then we hope that we will speed the withdrawal of the Russian forces from Afghanistan.

And beside that, the international political pressure is needed. For example, the Russia right now, they are losing in Afghanistan economically and militarily. They are losing. And they are taking very advanced electronic equipments and spare parts from Western countries. So it means that they are not worrying about the budget for their economic buildup. So they are spending all of their money for the military purpose. They are producing -- their production is just tanks and MIG-25 for the killing of people of Afghanistan. And from the other side, they can get easily their electronic equipments and other tradition from the Western countries, from other places.

So, then, economic -- surrounding economic of Russia -- I mean bringing political pressure and bringing economical pressure, and also we resisting inside Afghanistan, bring them military pressure. And they have to sit down and talk honestly about their withdrawal from Afghanistan.

BUCKLEY: Well, is it correct that at this point most of the weapons that you use are captured weapons from the Soviet troops?

RAHIM: Yeah. The major weapons that right now we are using are those weapons that we have captured in the fighting.

BUCKLEY: And do you have a problem in keeping ammunition in sufficient supply for those weapons?

RAHIM: Actually, you know, we have all our area under our control. We are using the ammunition. And from the security point of view, that is no problem. I mean we are fighting face-to-face. We are not acting as guerrillas, except the big towns. They have guerrilla activities inside, for example, in Kabul. But around Kabul, we are facing face-to-face. We have fronts and they have bases. They are attacking us and we are defending. So we can keep our [unintelligible] weapons with ourself in that area that we have under our control.

BUCKLEY: Well, Colonel Assil, in the conversations that

you had with the Soviets, did you get an impression on the question whether the West would come sufficiently to the help of the resistance? Or did they assume that the West would just sleep this one through?

COLONEL ASSIL: I heard many time from the Russian advisers, and they said that the United States and other Western countries, they are helping the resistance. This I heard many time from them. And they said that the United States and amny other Western countries, theyare helping the resistance and they are giving them the arm and other things.

BUCKLEY: Now, are they saying that for the benefit of their own morale, because they don't want to reveal that their own weapons have been stolen? Is that why they're saying that?

COLONEL ASSIL: They are saying because I heard from the Russian [unintelligible]. They are very strong to believe they haven't [unintelligible]. And they said yes for their morale also.

RAHIM: And you indeed bring the forces. First they say that let's go to Afghanistan. We will fight with U.S. Army, Chinese, and Pakistanis. So that's why they are repeating every time at the site also. But they don't have any evidence because we don't have any U.S. arms and people there to fighting. There are just Afghan people. That's why they are so demoralizing, due to the interview that we give with the captured prisoners that we have, Russian prisoners that we have captured. I mean their morale is very low. That's why they are not using any infantry forces in the site, except in some special places their commando force.

So, right now, exactly the fighting is between the people who doesn't have arm with the weapons -- more than weapons. Not -- I mean not the people with the people, not the soldier with the soldier. The fighting is this armed people with the modernist weapon. They are using helicopters, their tanks. I mean they are not using infantry.

BUCKLEY: Well now, you both have been here under the auspices of the Afghanistan Relief Committee and Freedom House, and you've been to various parts of America. Before I complete that question, let me ask you: Were you both in Paris in January when there were all those witnesses from Afghanistan to the torture?

RAHIM: No. We came after, two months after. We were in Oslo...

BUCKLEY: You were in Oslo.

RAHIM: Yeah.

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BUCKLEY: Well now, is it your impresison that the West is rallying or is not rallying to the cause of Afghanistan?

RAHIM: You mean they are taking interest or not?

BUCKLEY: Yes.

RAHIM: [Unintelligible] much that we want, they have not taken interest. But at least we have seen the feeling is exist between the Western countries, between the freedom-loving people. They like -- I mean they have sympathize with Afghan people. But talking is not enough, you know. They should take a part practically, to work together to do something for the freedom.

And from another side, they don't know too much about Afghanistan, what the Russian are doing there. When you talk about the Russian, suddenly the people, they are thinking about Vietnams. The Vietnam War is completely different from Afghanistan. In Vietnam the Russian and China, directly they helped the Vietnamese. And the main targets in Vietnam were the military posts and military bases, not the civilian. But right now, Afghanistan -- the Afghanistan people, they are fighting alone without any -- I mean they're alone in this war. And the main target in Afghanistan -- this is the feature and the nature of the Russian great army -- the main target is the civilian. They are killing the civilian. So this is big difference.

When you talk about the support and these things, some people, they are feeling like if we support, maybe the war will be increased. So [unintelligible] the Russian to kill all the world so they have control in all the world. What is the responsibility of the [unintelligible]? That they are killing the people without any reason and we should just stay and watch?

COLONEL ASSIL: And I said many time in different places that the Russian, they are not coming in Afghanistan as tourists. They are preparing for other countries. They want to reach as soon as possible to the Gulf to cut the nerve of the oil.

BUCKLEY: Well, what has been the attitude of the Ayatollah, given the fact that his country composes the whole of your western flank?

RAHIM: You know, everything inside Afghanistan belongs to our people will decide about their future and their system and everything. And we appreciate the help of others that they are helping for our refugees. But we are not letting anybody to interfere in our cause. I mean...

BUCKLEY: No. But I'm asking, do you receive help from Iran?

RAHIM: That much help for the refugees. We have more

than one million. But direct help to the resistance, no, we are not getting from any countries.

BUCKLEY: Is this a position that you need to take for formal reasons?

RAHIM: No. This is the truth. I mean...

BUCKLEY: Well, why would you -- you just finished --you've just finished asking for help, and now you've just finished telling me that you wouldn't accept help from any country.

RAHIM: We accept, of course. You know, the first responsibility is Islamic countries' responsibility. They have to. You know, right now, beside that they attack on our life, they attack on our religious too. The first responsibility is the Muslim countries' responsibility. The second responsibility is all the religious and believer -- I mean Christians, Jewish, all the believers. I mean this war right now is between the religious people, between those who loves their country, who fight for their god; and from other side, non-believer, the Communist Party, the communist ideology, who wants to punish, who wants to destroy everything: the religious, the culture, the country, and the life.

So we accept all helps from every -- all peoples.

BUCKLEY: So, what you're saying is that you're not receiving help, but you would be pleased to accept it if it were offered.

RAHIM: Sure. Of course.

BUCKLEY: And so let me ask you again. On the basis of this trip, do you feel that there is a sense of identification with your country by other people who have traditionally wanted to help people against whom there was oppression?

RAHIM: We've not seen any change yet, and we are trying to talk more to your...

BUCKLEY: Well, have you sought access to any senators or congressmen or representatives of the State Department?

RAHIM: Yeah. We meet some of their assistants, and we will have a program on the 7th of June to do a formal hearing. And we did one formal hearing with, I think, the Foreign Relation Committee.

COLONEL ASSIL: ...of Pennsylvania.

RAHIM: And Human Right Evaluation Committee. We have a

formal -- we had prepared statements and we talked. We have contacted and we like to contact and talk about Afghanistan.

BUCKLEY: So you are hopeful that there'll be a change in the position, but you haven't yet seen concrete signs of it.

RAHIM: No, we have not seen. We hope that...

BUCKLEY: Well, Mr. Reagan said in January, "The U.S. does not intend to forget these brave people and their struggle." But your complaint is that you don't know in what way that help is coming.

RAHIM: We think from Reagan and from all the people of the United States that they have sympathy with the Afghanistan people and Afghanistan cause. But we need more in concrete help.

BUCKLEY: Let's submit to our examiner. Mr. Paul Kreisberg was born in New York, attended City College of New York, got an advanced degree from Columbia in Chinese history. He has been with the State Department. He's been in Tanzania, in New Delhi, with the policy planning staff of the State Department. And as I mentioned, since 1981 he is the Director of Studies at the Council of Foreign Relations.

Mr. Kreisberg.

PAUL KREISBERG: I understand, Mr. Rahim and Colonel Assil, that you both represent different groups among the resistance elements. I wonder if you could explain why it is necessary for there to be so many rival resistance groups operating in Afghanistan and out of Peshawar, Pakistan, and whether it might not be more effective, in terms of resisting the Soviets and forcing them out, if there were a single resistance organization rather than a whole collection of different ones.

RAHIM: First of all, the being of different groups, this is the natural thing in every society. But especially in every revolution, there are some difficulties. But that much, it doesn't mean that we don't have cooperation and we are not unified in most of the things. The resistance inside Afghanistan, they have good cooperation. They are helping each other and they have relation with -- and right now, from political point of view, all parties right now, they are trying to have one unity. Right now, at least, they have one unity. And practically, inside Afghanistan, from six major parties, five parties, practically, they have unified and they're fighting together against Russian.

And also in Peshawar, the headquarters they have right now, they have made two alliance. And right now the activity is going on to bring these two alliance to one alliance and to have one spokesman and one high council for the leading of the resistance.

KREISBERG: And so there is no difference of agreement -- there are no differences on how weapons, for example, will be allocated and who will receive ammunition and who will receive weapons between these different groups?

RAHIM: If we get a weapon in our nation, there will be no problem, because all fronts are known, commanders are known, and everything is known. So, of course, our weapons and ammunition will go to those people who are fighting. So there will be no problem in that.

KREISBERG: There was a story in the American press in the last few days that alleged that of the equipment that was coming in from outside, through Pakistan, that the Pakistanis were skimming off, were taking away some of the best equipment for themselves. Is that true?

RAHIM: Actually, we don't know the source of that, which kind of weapons that come. But to understand, they have given us how much of which kind. But we didn't have seen any change in the policy of the Pakistan. We [unintelligible] from them, and they are helping for the refugees and for the people of Afghanistan.

KREISBERG: Some of the Mujahidin, some of the groups in Peshawar, at least, are in favor -- appear to be in favor of an Islamic state that sounds, at least to some of us in the West, very much like the kind of regime that the Ayatollah Khomeini has established in Iran. Other groups appear to be in favor of a much more secular and democratic type of regime in Afghanistan.

Do you think that it's necessary to have some kind of clear reconciliation or understanding before there were to be a withdrawal or before the Soviets could be expelled? What would Pakistan -- what should the United States think of a potential Afghanistan that was ruled by another Khomeini?

RAHIM: You know, the people of Afghanistan, we have two things, two hopes. The first is the freedom of Afghanistan. The second, the governing which is elected by the people of Afghanistan, which they respect that one. So the people of Afghanistan, they will choose their government. So we will have such a government that the president will be chosen by the people by election. There will be free election. And we will have a parliament. The parliament is responsible for making constitutions. And our foreign relation, we will keep our relation with all those countries who wants to have relation with us, and specially those countries who have been helped us during the hard time, and we will remember those people. And also we'll run our economy to reach the life of our people to the standard life which exists in the world.

And such a government that we want, we are not seeing

the model of that in the world yet. And to show you which model, I don't think that the government that we want it be the same as the government that is in Iran right now. And the Iran, they know, religiously, they are Shiite groups and we are Sunni, and principally in governments. So there are some technical difference. I mean beside the general principle that I discussed before, religiously, also, there are some difference. And I mentioned that we don't have any model yet to show you.

KREISBERG: Mr. Buckley, do you -- you've looked at the Soviets in a wide range of their activities around the world. Do you see any reason to think that the Soviets are going to be able to withdraw or would be willing to withdraw or can be forced out of Afghanistan by force?

BUCKLEY: It seems to me unlikely that they could be repelled and unlikely that they would elect any peace, save one that gave them substantially what they wanted. All the more so, it seems to me, since if my intelligence is correct, the economic effort to sustain this offensive is being generated largely by the dissipation of local assets. They're getting gas, they're getting minerals, they're getting experts. So that the two or three billion dollar cost of this war is one that's being paid by the Afghan people. Which is one of the reasons why I tend to be pessimistic at that level.

KREISBERG: But if that's your assessment, do you see any end to this except, potentially, ultimately, the extermination of the Afghan people?

BUCKLEY: Well, I think that, to a certain extent, depends on the momentum, if any, that's gathered up by the West. I don't know who would have brought up the subject of acid rain if the Wall Street Journal hadn't happened on it. Not our State Department, so far as I can see. Not the White House, so far as I can see. The Wall Street Journal developed a case against the Soviet use of acid rain in Afghanistan, and of course in Southeast Asia. And that now is pretty well accepted.

Is that your judgment, Mr. Kreisberg?

KREISBERG: Yes.

BUCKLEY: It's widely accepted.

Now, given that this is beginning to erode certain levels of communist self-professions in diplomatic conferences, they might find that this gets a little bit antsy as they build up to their great show of force next fall when they ask people to take their word that they will abide by disarmament treaties.

So whether or not there can be a concatenation of psychological pressures sufficient to cause them to reconsider, I

don't know. A lot -- that answer is, to a certain extent, dependent on one's knowledge of Andropov's character, of which I know very little.

KREISBERG: Colonel Assil, given what Mr. Buckley has just said, how encouraged can you be that even over the next three or five or ten years the Mujahidin will be successful? I mean suppose the Soviets bring in another 50,000 or another 100,000 or another 150,000. Are not the Mujahidin fighting against almost insuperable odds? Is not all of this simply going to be paid for in the blood of the Afghan people?

COLONEL ASSIL: You know, our people, my people decided to fight until there will be on Russian soldier present of my homeland. We decided that we are fighting -- that is true that the Russian -- the continuing of the war will be for the benefit of the Russian. We know that. But, you know, since three years and half year resisting with bare hands, with hundreds of difficulties, but the morale of our people is very high. And as I told you before, we decided we will be free or we will be die. That's our decision.

KREISBERG: Suppose the Russians were to simply decide the cost is too high and they were to negotiate a withdrawal, first with the Pakistanis and then, conceivably, bringing in members of the Mujahidin as well. Would you be prepared, would the two of you be prepared to see an amnesty in Afghanistan for all those who have worked with the Soviets over the last three years?

RAHIM: You mean the puppets which...

KREISBERG: All of those people who have -- the people that you describe as puppets, the people in the army, the people in the Kalq and the Parksham (?).

RAHIM: You mean -- you know, I mentioned before that the negotiation, if the Russian really and honestly, they be ready to talk about their withdrawal -- and they have to talk about the security of their force, how do they withdraw their forces from Afghanistan. So except talking with Mujahidin, nobody else has power in Afghanistan. And at that time, we are ready to sit with the Russian and talk about the withdraw of their forces only.

So, about what we do with our people, what our people will decide about those puppets, that belongs to our own country, and our people will decide about that one. So there is no need to talk with the Russian. Why we should talk with the Russian about our Afghans?

BUCKLEY: You haven't quite answered his question, though, Mr. Rahim. Mr. Kreisberg is asking you, would you grant



amnesty to people who are traitors right now? Would you be willing to forgive them if the Soviet Union withdrew and a settlement was sought?

COLONEL ASSIL: You know, we lost more than one million people. And we have more than three million refugees. You said for the people who helped the government. That belong of the future judgment. That's belong to the trial.

KREISBERG: But you, personally. Do you see these as war criminals that would need to be punished? I'm asking, really, for your own opinion.

RAHIM: They are not punishing like the Russian are torturing. But at least they should answer to the people. That is the normal thing, you know. But we won't torture anybody like what the Russian are torturing. So there will be an investigation. There will be a talking. There will be interrogation. And the people will judge about that.

KREISBERG: Now, you were commenting before on the negotiations between the Pakistanis and the U.N. and the Russians, and you appeared to be quite critical of the Pakistanis for engaging in these discussions. Have you expressed your concern to Pakistan? Have you asked that they discontinue these talks?

RAHIM: Yes. We have mentioned that to our friends in, especially, Pakistan that we appreciate their political activities about the withdrawal of the Russian from Afghanistan, but they should consider that, you know, the KGB, and especial Andropov, he spent a lot of his time and he's smart enough to act as a KGB chief. So they should take [unintelligible] two purpose the Russian have in this negotiation: one to recognize, somehow, their puppets; and the second is to bring the attention of the world toward a negotiation and increase their [unintelligible] inside Afghanistan.

So, for this purpose, we have mentioned to Pakistanis that they should take care that the resistance opinion, and the resistance opinion is that they should sit with the Russian and talk about Afghanistan.

KREISBERG: But now, if you go back a long time in Afghan history, certainly back to the 19th Century and back into the 1920s, when the treaty was signed with the Russians, and then after the Second World War, there's been an image that Afghanistan has always had a special relationship with the Soviet Union. I mean for many years the Soviets were the only ones to provide arms to the Afghan Army, and many Afghan soldiers were trained in the Soviet Union.

Would you see the possibility of an agreement or a final conclusion which gave full account to the Soviet interest in

having a friendly country on their borders?

RAHIM: Actually, the people of Afghanistan won't let Afghanistan to be under interest of any power. This is the decision of our people. But if they don't interfere in our internal -- I mean inside Afghanistan, so as a neighbor we can have relation with them. It's no problem.

KREISBERG: Colonel Assil, you were asked by Mr. Buckley a few minutes ago about what happened with the Soviet advisers and the Soviet people in the police. In your conversations with the Soviets, did you get any feeling from them as to how long they thought it was going to take them to win in Afghanistan?

COLONEL ASSIL: They didn't say that. But generally, they said that we came as a friend, according to the request of the puppets -- I mean the president. And we will leave this country when there will be any security for the...

RAHIM: Their puppets.

COLONEL ASSIL: Their puppets and their other interest people, you know, and the member of the Communist Party of Afghanistan.

KREISBERG: Mr. Buckley, do you think that the United States and the West should provide more direct and more substantial military assistance?

BUCKLEY: Absolutely. I see no reason at all why our commitments to international peace and international integrity of other nations aren't served by attempting to make repression costly. It seems to me that we have an obligation, under our treaty of the United Nations, to help people in situations like that. I think it's consistent with whatever's left of the doctrine of containment.

So my answer is a most emphatic yes.

By the way, Mr. Kreisberg, I think we should acknowledge this: that a month or two after the Soviet troops came down, we were told -- at least I was told, and perhaps you were also -- that we must not compare the longevity of Afghan resistance to the longevity of Vietnam resistance, because Vietnam had an actual cover; whereas the Afghans would be totally exposed on their mountain peaks, to be picked off just like that by Soviet helicopters. In point of fact, nobody would have predicted -- at least nobody did in my presence two years ago -- that in June of 1983 there would be so virtually successful, in terms of longevity, a resistance movement.

Does that square with your...

KREISBERG: I think that's right. I think that no one really envisaged that the Soviets, in part, were going to be as inefficient at carrying out guerrilla warfare as they have. Now, there's a general acceptance, I think, that the Soviets have learned a great deal. They've learned a great deal about fighting this kind of war, and they've also learned...

BUCKLEY: Chemical warfare helps.

KREISBERG: Chemical -- and they've learned -- they've managed to test a fair number of their new weapons. In a way, it provides a very useful test base for the...

BUCKLEY: Torture's not new.

KREISBERG: Torture's not new. That's old. And I don't know that they're using any new techniques there, either.

I was going to ask whether either of your visitors have any sense of what happens when these young Afghans who've gone to the Soviet Union for training -- the U.S. Government estimates perhaps six to ten thousand are sent off to the Soviet Union for education of various sorts every year. So there must be 18 or 30, or even more, thousand who've returned. You were estimating before that the number of puppets were really very small, under 10,000, perhaps. You don't see these people who go off to the Soviet Union as coming back more deeply committed to the Soviets?

RAHIM: You know, before they send those young boys to Russia, they say that the best society in the world is Russia. When they go and see, practically, what is going on in Russia, they are coming back with such an impression for the benefit of the resistance. That's why they come back they are joining with the Mujahidin instead of helping the Russian, because they have seen, practically, what the Russian really doing for their own people. Such a dictatorship is present there and the life standard is very bad and the condition is very bad. That's why when they come back they reverse, you know, all they have heard in Afghanistan about the Russia.

So, they have not succeed too much in this command, their programs.

KREISBERG: Colonel Assil, I wonder if you could tell us perhaps a little bit about what kind of an internal network the Afghan resistance has inside both the government and inside the Soviet force structure.

BUCKLEY: You have just 15 seconds, Colonel.

COLONEL ASSIL: I can say in every place, in every where, in every ministry there are many Afghans who are helping the Mujahidin. They inform -- if there is movement, military movement, they inform the Mujahidin. If there is any danger for

the Mujahidin, they inform the Mujahidin to escape from this place.

So, we have always, in every place, our friend in every intelligence. Maybe in Cabinet also.

BUCKLEY: Thank you very much, Colonel Assil. And thank you, Mr. Rahim. Both resistance leaders here under the auspices of the Afghanistan Relief Committee and Freedom House.